

FACT SHEET



Nichols, Iowa Ground Water Site
Nichols, Iowa

April 1999

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 is conducting sampling in Nichols, Iowa, the week of April 5, 1999. EPA is conducting the sampling to better define the sources of herbicide and nitrate contamination found in the ground water. The sampling activity should be completed by the end of the week. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) requested that EPA take the lead in continuing to investigate the contamination.

BACKGROUND

In January 1997, IDNR sampled three private wells in response to a complaint about the ground water. Nitrates and herbicides, such as alachlor, atrazine and metolachlor, were discovered in the water. Additional sampling of private wells was conducted later in 1997 by IDNR and the Muscatine County Health Department, and Monsanto. The results of that sampling also indicated the presence of nitrates, alachlor and atrazine in the ground water. Some of the contaminants were found at levels above the public drinking water standards, also called maximum contaminant levels (MCLs).

Based on the samples taken, two sites located on the northwest edge of Nichols were identified by IDNR as possible sources of the contamination. The sites are the former AMOCO Cropmate site and Nichols Agriservice.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

EPA will take samples of soil, sediment, and ground water at seven areas to determine if they could be sources of the contamination. Ground water samples will be taken from monitoring wells and private residences. Samples taken at private residences will be taken from the tap inside the house. This task usually takes less than an hour to complete per household. Property owners will receive the sample results.

United Ag Products is currently supplying bottled water to approximately 13 homes with contaminated water above the MCL. Monsanto, the maker of alachlor, and Novartis, the maker of atrazine, are supplying filters to remove herbicides in water to approximately 20 homes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information, please contact:

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